# THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER AND THE COURSE OF STUDY

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THE faculty of the School of Education, University of Chicago, greets its friends, especially the students and graduates of the Cook County Normal School, the Chicago Normal School, and the Chicago Institute.

We are confident that the new position of the school as a department of the University of Chicago gives us far greater advantages in our work than we have ever had before. This work may be fairly understood by many teachers, still a restatement of it may not be out of place here, as the old faculty enters into its new environment.

The members of the faculty of the School of Education have been studying and practicing together for a number of years in the schools above named. They have a boundless faith in human progress through education. Education is human evolution assisted, and therefore co-ordinate with it; education is the realization of unlimited possibilities; and the members of the faculty endeavor to march along the endless pathway of unrealized possibilities of human growth. In private study, in faculty, departmental, and grade meetings, they discuss every theory and supposed truth discovered in their study and practice. In teaching they strive to eliminate the useless, or least useful, and

to adopt that which is of greater economy in educative self-activity. Their system consists in searching for the truth in education, and their method in the personal application of the truth to individual growth. Each member of the faculty has perfect liberty in study and application. Such liberty is the only means of reaching the unity which lies far deeper than superficial uniformity. *Preparation, preparation, preparation,* is the watchword; liberty of action the rule; and close, careful, honest study the line of progress. Each grade teacher prepares the work of his or her pupils for the succeeding month. Monthly departmental courses are prepared by the departmental teachers respectively. A new feature will be introduced, beginning with the December number—that of a review of the actual work in the classes during the previous month. These reviews will show what has been done and what has not been done, what has succeeded and what has failed.

The COURSE OF STUDY is useful: (1) As a course of study for the entire faculty. Through it each member of the faculty may comprehend the work of every other teacher as well as the work of the entire school. (2) As a basis for discussion and criticism in faculty, departmental, and grade meetings. (3) In enabling each member of the faculty, by a study of the outlines month by month, to prepare his or her individual outlines. (4) As forming the course of study for the professional training class in all subjects and under every teacher. All outlines are to include complete book and apparatus references. (5) In enabling parents and guardians to know just what work their children and wards are doing day by day, and to criticise the school with intelligence, to the profit of both teachers and pupils.

These are some of the uses of the COURSE OF STUDY in the work of the School of Education itself. It is safe to say that the more efficient this printed preparation is in the immediate work of our faculty, the greater its use may be for all progressive teachers and students of education.

The faculty is striving to follow the methods of all true scientists now at work in thousands of laboratories, indoors and out. Whatever of important truths or working hypotheses a

scientist discovers becomes the property of his brother-scientists and of the world.

The chemist, for instance, works with all the facts and discoveries of his science; he reinforces his own particular problems with all the past, eliminates all failures, and uses all successes. Thus scientists all over the world form a union for the steady evolution of the sciences. Their faith in the infinity of truth is perfect. Everything as yet discovered is to them but the beginning of that which may be. Thus enthusiasm expands; honest, careful investigators keep their truth-searching minds open to discoveries; failures and old hypotheses sink out of sight as new truths and new hypotheses take their places. It is plain that the general method of science should become the method of those who search for truth in the science of all sciences, that of education. Notwithstanding the marked progress in education during the past few years, the science of sciences is still in an exceedingly crude condition. There is comparatively very little experiment and investigation in schoolrooms on the plan now universal in science. True it is, indeed, that the air is full of doctrines and theories, but of them little reaches the child. Educational conflicts and discussions are, in general, on a very low plane. They mean little else than dogma opposed to dogma and partisan against partisan. The great majority of teachers, guided by influential leaders, strive to idealize the old word-learning education, which may be characterized as the Ptolemaic system, with knowledge at the center surrounded by satellites. One party, a very small one, asserts that character, citizenship, or community life is the center, and knowledge the environment of planets and stars. Each party strives hard to intrench itself, to solidify its walls and fortresses, from which very little advance is made.

No science demands so much knowledge and skill as that of education. Still it is true that graduates of normal schools, colleges, and universities are very weak in the practice of teaching. They are often not only incapable as teachers, but seem to possess no powers to advance; strong, earnest, indefatigable acquirers of knowledge may be entirely divorced from educational

problems and practice teaching. Everything depends upon the attitude of the teacher toward the subject of education. A strong, abiding belief in the infinite possibilities of education lies back of all personal progress. A deep feeling haunts the true teacher that everything he does, that every subject, every lesson taught, every bit of schoolroom work done, may be infinitely improved.

One path is marked out more clearly than any other: the record of growth by education must be read immediately in the body, mind, and soul of the pupil. Inspection, examination, is continuous and everlasting. Is this body, mind, and soul enjoying the highest, most economical self-activity? What shall I do to increase the educative self-activity on the part of this pupil? Is this reading really educative mind-growth? Is this arithmetic a necessity felt by my pupils? are some of the questions that lead to thought and consequent personal advancement. Routine, fixed methods, copying, imitation, stand directly in the way of learning how to teach.

The name COURSE OF STUDY is the embodiment of the new idea of education; to wit, constant elimination and addition, under thorough and careful study. The faculty of the School of Education presents its work in printed form to all its fellow-teachers, with suggestions of how it may be used. Any course of study, to a genuine teacher, is *suggestive*, but never *imperative; the needs of pupils* determine what they should have in the way of knowledge and skill. To follow implicitly any course of study is fatal to the interests of pupils. The students of the COURSE OF STUDY find carefully made suggestions from every grade and department teacher in the School of Education, as also from the teachers in the Francis W. Parker School (the school that has taken the place of the elementary school of the Chicago Institute on the North Side and is affiliated with the School of Education). The questions that students ask are: What are these suggestions? Are they needed as a whole, or in part, by my pupils? How shall I use the suggestions? What item, or items, should I adapt to the needs of my pupils?

All teachers may profitably use the outlines in the COURSE

OF STUDY. A slight classification, however, may make clear its adaptation to particular classes:

1. The students, including the graduates, of the School of Education, of the Chicago Institute, of the Chicago Normal School, and of the Cook County Normal School, may profitably use the COURSE OF STUDY from month to month and year to year, as an extension of the work they have already done. Such study will keep them close to the work of the faculty and its individual members.

2. Teachers and students who propose to attend the School of Education may use the COURSE OF STUDY as an effective means of preparation. They may take the courses in psychology, pedagogy, and other subjects, and study and apply the grade outlines, and thus enter the School of Education prepared to do advanced work.

3. Many teachers are not able to take the regular pedagogical course, and must content themselves with the twelve weeks, or less, of the Summer School. It goes without saying that the stronger students are at entering the Summer School, the better they can profit by its lessons and lectures. Summer School students may use the COURSE OF STUDY in their school work and private study during the year, and thus prepare themselves for advanced courses in the Summer School.

4. The COURSE OF STUDY is an excellent text-book for teachers' clubs, associations, and corps of teachers who study together. By means of it theory and practice may be studied in the closest relation.

5. It may seem presumptuous to recommend the combined exposition of the theory and practice of a large corps of expert teachers as a text-book for normal schools and departments of education. Still it seems to me that the COURSE OF STUDY should take its place as a pedagogical work of great value to all students of education.

The COURSE OF STUDY is not a magazine or review; it is not to be read and cast aside. Each number is a teacher's manual to remain on the teacher's desk, or in the study, for constant reference. The numbers bound form a yearbook that will show

progress, correlations, and details of teaching. Correspondence, criticisms, and pertinent questions are invited. The members of the faculty of the School of Education have one purpose, and that is to assist all their fellow-teachers in studying the art of all arts.

## NATURAL SCIENCE.

WILBUR S. JACKMAN.

DURING the month of October the work in nature study will be based upon the materials observed and gathered during the field trips. These will include studies of the sand-dune region, embracing lakeshore, dry dune, and marsh areas; of the north shore district, including dry upland as well as shore areas; also studies of inland wooded and prairie areas, as well as the valley region bordering the drainage canal. Among the topics to be considered may be mentioned:

I. *Plant and animal life.*— 1. In the marsh areas: (*a*) The regular succession of plants from the dry, high shores toward the middle of the water area. (*b*) The adaptation of root, leaf, and stem to the water environment; to growth in the mud; to growth in the dry soil. (*c*) The disappearance of characteristic plants as the lakelet becomes filled or drained. (*d*) The appearance of new plants. The characteristic animals of the marshes, especially the birds. Their adaptations to the water; to the mud, to the vegetation, and to the lakeshore. The succession of animal forms during the transition period from the lake to the dry ground. The fish; the mussels, snails, crawfish, and frogs. Adaptations of each to the various stages of transition. Consider the problems which relate to breathing, locomotion, food-getting, escape, defense, attack, concealment, etc.

2. In the dune areas: (*a*) The characteristics of plants that can gain a foothold on shifting sand. (*b*) The problem of moisture — how solved? (*c*) Effect of plant life on dune formation. (*d*) Conditions leading to discomfiture and the overthrow of dune plants. (*e*) The succession of plants on the dunes; characteristics of the latest plants. The birds and insects of the dunes and on the lakeshore. Food and nests. Care of young.

3. Dry clayey uplands: Adaptations of grass and other characteristic plants of dry grounds with the rushes and sedges of the marshes. Contrasted with the dune plants. The effect of stable conditions upon the form and growth of plants. Traces of animal life. Contrast with that found in the marshes in variety and richness.

4. Woodland areas: The adaptations of the smaller plants to the subdued light of the woods. The successions of plants from the open prairie to the